

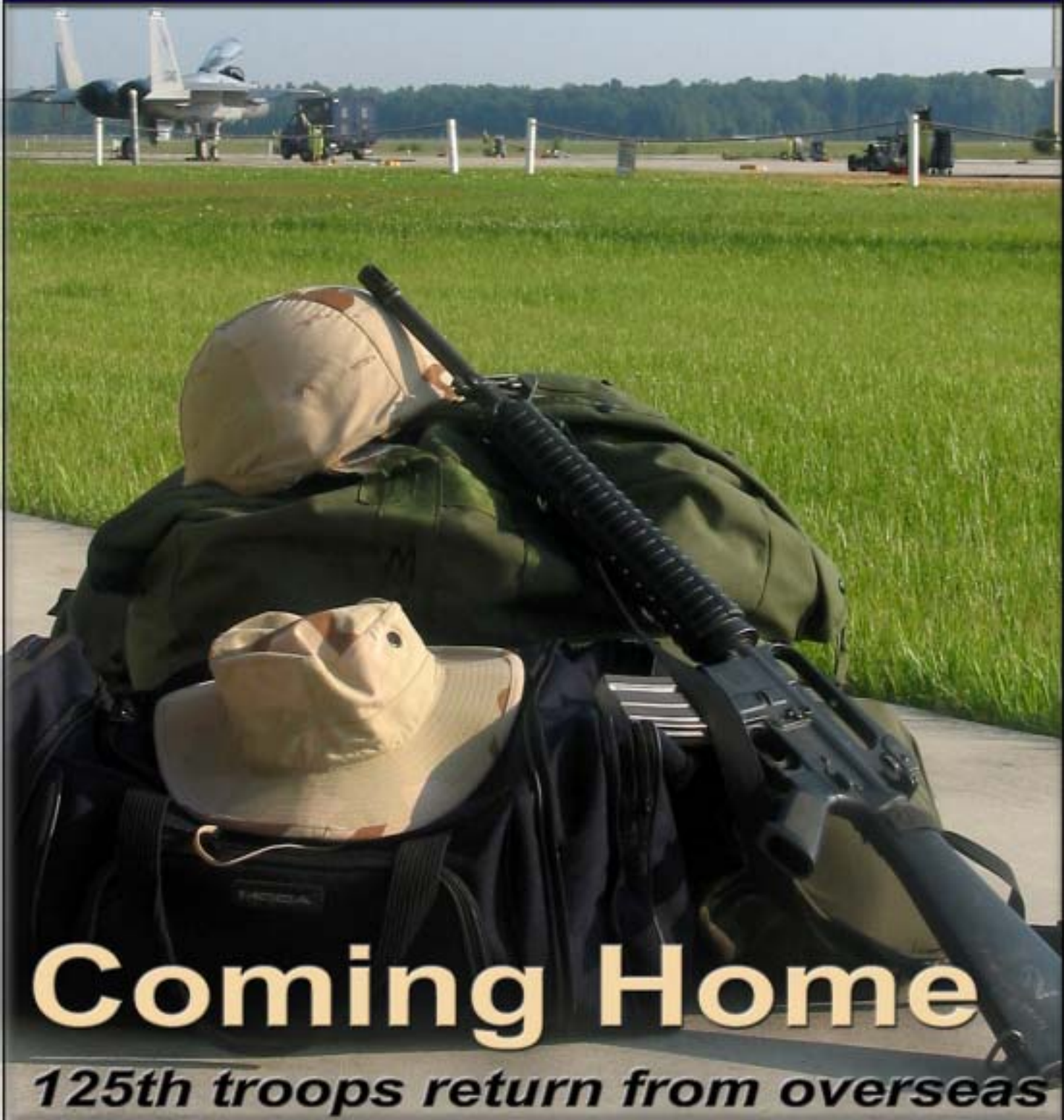
The Eagle's Eye

125th Fighter Wing, Florida Air National Guard



Summer 2003

Volume 3, Issue 2



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Cover: Pictured are some of the various items deployed members must carry over with them to the desert. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Michelle L. Thomas) Back cover: Captain Ken Brandt gives Warren Croke, reporter from Ch. 12 News in Jacksonville, Fla., a hand with his luggage. The men just returned from a deployment training exercise, July 21, 1963. (125th Historical photo).

Commander's Column

By Col. James A. Firth
125th Fighter Wing Commander

As I pen this column, it is amazing to me how much the world situation has changed, and how much the 125th Fighter Wing, as well as the entire U.S. Air Force has accomplished since my last article. Already, our focus as a Wing has moved on to the next set of challenges we will successfully meet together.

While our support of Operation Noble Eagle and the Global War on Terrorism continues, the top priority for the Wing for the next few months is to prepare for the upcoming Unit Compliance Inspection (UCI) scheduled for Sept. 11-16, 2003.

To date the men and women of our Wing have performed in an absolutely superb manner and have a great deal to be proud of. Together, we've operated successfully at an extremely high operations tempo since the events of 9/11. Supporting a Noble Eagle alert commitment of eight aircraft at two alert locations for almost seven months, while also leading the Air National Guard F-15 community in sortie generation to help prepare for possible combat operations in Iraq is no small feat.

We've committed significant personnel involvement supporting Operations' Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

During this period, our focus as a Wing was clearly directed at these combat priorities.

I could not be prouder of the incredible work each of you has done to help us achieve the im-

pressive results we've accomplished.

We could not have accomplished all we have during this period without prioritizing. It is time to focus our priorities in a few areas not possible during the post 9/11 ops tempo.

Our top priority as a Wing now is to prepare for the UCI. This inspection is focused primarily on our adherence to Air Force and Air National Guard Instructions and evaluates a great deal of administrative and record-keeping practices.

Since 9/11, it has been challenging to operate at the tempo

"We have an absolutely superb reputation as a Wing, and I look forward to having the ACC IG team here to validate our administrative performance..."

we've faced, while also keeping up with all the administrative and documentation requirements.

Unit Compliance Inspection preparations will give us a good opportunity to ensure we are performing these duties to the same superb level we have our Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom missions.

To help us focus our efforts as a Wing, the Group commanders and I have adjusted the entire unit operating schedule, to include the flying program, to provide appropriate time for necessary functional areas to prepare for this inspection.

All items identified in the 1999 UCI, items identified in our recent 1st Air Force Staff Assistance Visit, as well as review of



all current C&SRLs should be accomplished by each functional area by the end of July to ensure we are in compliance or working towards compliance. I ask each of you to take the time to ensure we dedicate the appropriate effort to prepare for this important evaluation.

We have an absolutely superb reputation as a Wing, and I look forward to having the ACC IG team here to validate our administrative performance.

The coming months will continue to present us with important missions and exciting challenges.

Fighter deployments to Nellis AFB, AEF taskings and a Mission Support Group deployment are all scheduled for 2004.

Phase One and Two exercises are on tap as well to help us prepare for our Operational Readiness Inspection scheduled for December 2005 - February 2006.

I look forward to successfully meeting these challenges with you.

Rehear



Photos by Staff Sgt. Lee O. Tucker

Fire rescue workers put out the ‘flames’ from the explosion at the 125th Fighter Wing’s front gate.



A ‘victim’ is carried out of a van immediately after the explosion. Medical squadron personnel made up or ‘moulaged’ the victims prior to the exercise. Moulage includes a variety of procedures for making up participants of exercises so that they look like they have real injuries. Realistic injuries increase the effectiveness of community disaster drills and exercises.



sal For Disaster

*By Staff Sgt. Michelle L. Thomas
125th Public Affairs*

The 125th Fighter Wing and civilian response agencies held a Major Accident Response Exercise (MARE) here May 4, 2003. The exercise evaluated the Wing's ability to manage a mass casualty incident. The scenario began at approximately 8 a.m., when a van driven by a 'terrorist' on a suicide mission attempted to gain access to the base. Upon being denied access, he detonated a bomb at the front gate. The 'explosion' resulted in four deaths and a major fuel leak from an inbound fuel tanker.

The MARE ultimately provided a realistic training opportunity for those on the response team and for the Exercise Evaluation Team (EET).



Technical Sgt. Richard N. Geer, a 125th Communications Flight graphics journeyman, films the various response actions during the Major Accident Response Exercise (MARE). Video and still photography was a vital component during the MARE. A clear understanding of an emergency situation is hard to convey person-to-person over the telephone or radio. Although this was just an exercise, during a real accident a picture could be worth a thousand words.



A member of the response team 'tags' a body part found after the 'explosion.' Although a gruesome job, the task brought a sense of realism to the exercise.

Home, Sweet Home?

Successful Reunions: *The last phase of your mission*

By Lt. Col. Steven E. Thompson
125th Chaplain

Homecomings are not automatically sweet. Those special people in your life that were left behind missed you and are excited about your safe return.

However, they are not the same people you left behind, you are not the same person you were when you left and things have changed while you were gone. It is not unusual to come home to a laundry list of problems.

These may include bills, family disputes, employment issues and intimacy concerns.

Sometimes troops feel guilt or shame over some of their actions. They may experience uncontrolled



or frequent crying, sleep problems (too little, too much), depression, anxiety, anger, stress-related physical illness (head and backache, gastrointestinal problems, nightmares, difficulty concentrating and even thoughts of suicide. It's no wonder they often resort to excessive drinking or drug use.

It takes time to adjust. Giving attention and effort to this readjustment period can help reduce a great deal of stress, anxiety, frustration and anger.

The following tips will help you complete this last leg of your mission, i.e., successfully restarting your relationships and re-engaging the new world that is before you.

Eight tips for resilience during homecoming

1. Expect things to have changed! Be quick to compliment and slow to criticize.
2. Plan on spending time with your family, but don't be surprised if their routines crowd your need for their attention! This is especially true for teenagers.
3. Go easy on disciplining your children! Small children may act shy around you and older children may try your patience.
4. Avoid going on a spending spree to celebrate your return! Debt increases pressure. It does not diminish it.
5. Work together as a family to solve problems! Reduce them to smaller portions and deal with them one bite at a time.
6. Talk! Talk! Talk! And talk some more! Your family cannot read your mind nor can you read theirs.
7. It is natural for family, friends and work associates to want to hear your story! Don't be surprised, however, if they do not always interpret events as you do or if they quickly move on to other issues.
8. Don't be afraid to ask for help! Good friends, ministers, mental health professionals and financial advisors are just a few of the many resources available. I am always available to talk with and pray with you. Seeking help when you are feeling overwhelmed is not a sign of weakness. It is a sign of intelligence!

It's Hurricane Season

Are you Prepared?

*By Tech. Sgt. Julie Fisher
125th Readiness Office*

Hurricane season is under way. Here are some quick facts you should know:

- Hurricane season is June through November.
- The peak of activity is mid-August through October.
- Six to nine hurricanes are predicted for the 2003 season.
- Advance preparation is the key to survival.
- Prepare your home, prepare your family and prepare yourself.
- Know the location of shelters in the community in case you need to evacuate your home.
- Most shelters do not accept pets. Plan in advance for their care (i.e. a kennel, friends or family).
- Purchase an emergency hurricane kit that includes flashlights, batteries, a wireless radio, fire extinguisher, first aid kit, prescription medications, food and water. These items are essential should your home lose power or if the roads will be too flooded to leave.
- Interior rooms on the first floor are the safest place to seek shelter during a storm.
- If the power goes out, use caution with candles. More people die from candle-related fires than from the disaster itself. Light sticks and flashlights are safer alternatives.
- For more information about planning for a hurricane and surviving a storm, stop by the readiness office in Building nine, second floor. Several different hurricane guides are available.
- Two useful websites are the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's website, www.nhc.noaa.gov, and the Weather Channel's website, www.weather.com. Both have information including hurricane advisory maps, radar images, storm tracks, projected path maps, and forecasting and tracking techniques.
- For up-to-date information about your community including shelters and evacuation routes, contact your local emergency management office.

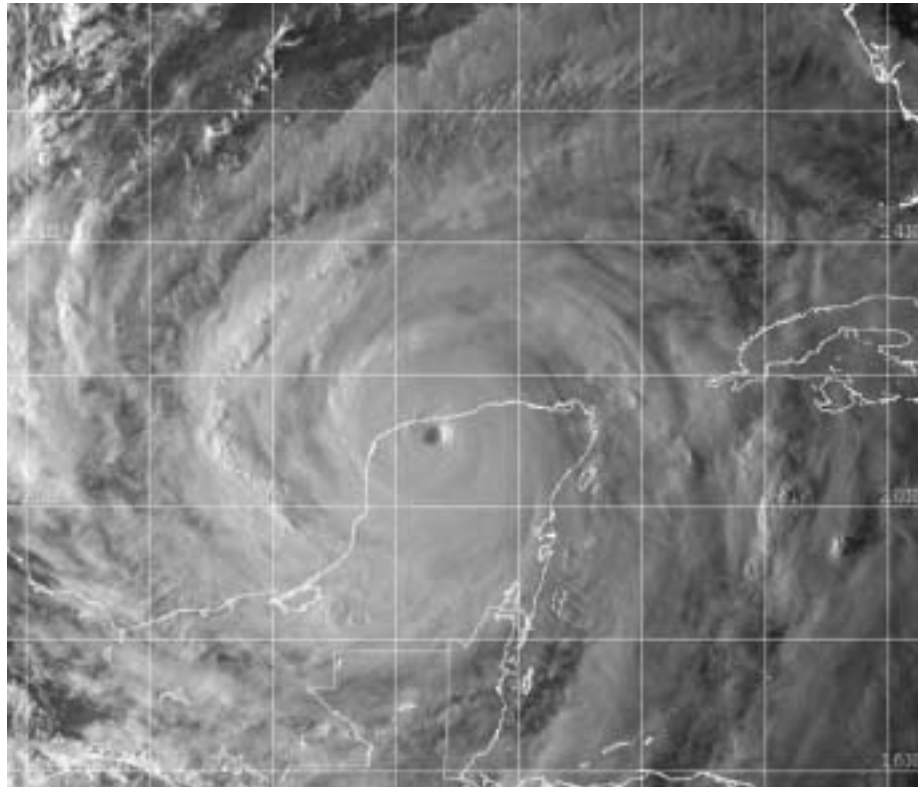


Photo courtesy of the National Weather Service

Contact the 125th Readiness Office, extension 7623 for additional information.



From the cockpit...

By Lt. Col. T. G. "Krazy" Kyrakis, II
125th Fighter Wing Safety Office

U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt Michael Ammons

The 159th Fighter Squadron recently deployed to Nellis AFB, Nev. shortly after finding out that we would not be deploying overseas to support the war in Iraq.

We needed to deploy somewhere to hone our flying skills that had been peaking in anticipation of the potential conflict abroad.

The natural choice was Nellis.

Nellis is located on the north side of the grown-up playground capital of the world, Las Vegas, making a trip to Nellis highly desirable. However, I'm going to focus on what makes Nellis a great place to be *from the cockpit!*

The truly memorable aspect of flying at Nellis is the range complex that begins about 15 miles north of the base. The range continues for over 120 miles to the northwest of Nellis. It is equipped with a system that digitally tracks the location of over 60 aircraft, displaying their

altitude, airspeed, G's, and weapons parameters.

The west end of the airspace contains a variety of real or simulated surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) radars, to facilitate realistic electronic indications of a SAM attack. The most endearing feature of the range, however, is the terrain.

It is a combination of desert and mountains with 10-15 miles of flat areas separated by one to two thousand foot mountainous ridges. This allows aircraft to physically 'hide' behind the mountain ridges, invisible to air-to-air radars, ground surveillance radars, and even AWACs.

125th home-station training is conducted over water 99% of the time, and pilots become used to always seeing the adversary on the radar, because there is no place to hide. Not true at Nellis. The

terrain better simulates the overland areas of the world we might deploy to. Now, it's time to jump back in the cockpit for a typical mission at Nellis...

...I'm orbiting above 30 thousand feet at the eastern edge of the airspace, in the center of a line of seven other F-15's. The Eagles are spread out with a couple of miles of separation between each and it's hard to see the far one's. The Eagles are flying in an east/west racetrack pattern waiting for all the bombers we're protecting to join us in the marshalling area.

Every time I turn to the west, I stare hard at the radar, trying to see what trap the adversaries are trying to set up. Finally, everyone is in position, and at the predetermined time, this large package of aircraft pushes across the imaginary line into bad-guy land.

Within 30 seconds the radios become a congested mess of

calls with the AWACs and the fighters trying to figure out where the bandits are, what they are doing and whether they meet the rules-of-engagement to be shot at.

I'm doing my best just to keep sight of my flight lead and make sense of the radio chatter.

Amongst the din, a critical call gets through to my brain, "Fang Two, pop-up threat west, 10 miles!"

Oh no. There is someone low behind that ridge up ahead, and I wasn't paying enough attention to it on my radar. Suddenly my radar warning receiver lights up, and a loud warbling tone in my headset tells me the bad guy's probably shooting at me. Even though I can't see him yet, I go into an Eight G break turn and start descending rapidly to try to get into the ground clutter myself. Luckily, my flight lead sees two adversary aircraft, locks them up with his radar, and shoots them both.

They turn and leave to the north, and I feel lucky the referees watching the tracking system did not call me a "kill".

Well now what? I had to react to that attack, so I'm low altitude, and the strikers I'm assigned to protect are a couple of miles ahead of me.

Can't waste the time to climb back up to altitude, so I just stay low and push it up faster!

The wind noise from going over 650 miles an hour is so loud in the cockpit I can just barely hear the radios so I take a second to turn up the volume. Two miles ahead is another large ridge, and I have no idea what is on the backside of it.

I pull up hard to avoid the ridge then roll on my back and pull back down to get low again on the other side. Just as I crest the ridge, a large jolt of turbulence knocks my helmet into the canopy. (Note to self: cinch down that lap belt tighter next time...)

I roll back upright, and my radar has locked onto something dead ahead, eight miles away. Who is that? A friendly, or a bad guy?

Again, my overloaded brain picks something out of the frantic calls on the radio, "...hostile west eight miles, 10 thousand..." that

matches the parameters of my lock range.

I check one more time electronically that it is not a friendly, and then I mash the pickle button, sending a simulated AMRAAM missile on its way. Just as I mentally celebrate my minor victory, that nasty warbling tone comes up on my headset again. I glance at the radar-warning receiver, and say a silent curse as I realize that a SAM system is engaging me. I turn hard away from the missile site, and see a trail of smoke rising from the ground.

They've actually launched a SAM simulator (like a large, smoking model rocket), indicating that a missile is actually being fired electronically at me.

I head for the ridge ahead, drop all the chaff I have loaded and pull a couple of high G maneuvers ducking behind the ridge as I cross it. Again, I wait for the voice to come across the radio to say that I'm dead but the call never comes. Lucky again!

The radios are again a mess of calls as the strikers enter their target area, being attacked by the SAMs and the few remaining adversaries that my fellow F-15's didn't already kill. The chatter subsides in a minute and I hear that the bombers are now heading out of harm's way. Time to gather up the air-to-air forces, and head them home. I finally climb back to 20,000 feet and realize the air-conditioning works a lot better up there. I head east. Now all that's left is to get all 40 aircraft on the ground with out running anyone out of gas. Piece of cake...

This is just a sample of the stressful training that goes on only at the Nellis ranges.

It truly is a national asset.

An asset that we will again deploy to sometime in the near future. Hopefully I won't blow my per diem at the craps table again...



Photo by Capt. Robert T. Botkin

Assistant Secretary of the Air Force visits the 125th

*By Maj. Richard E. Bittner
125th Public Affairs*

Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Installations, Environment and logistics, the Honorable Nelson F. Gibbs, visited with members and leadership of the 125th and FLANG HQ staff here Thursday, July 3, 2003.

As Assistant Secretary, Gibbs heads the three division departments that deal at the policy level with Air Force facility and logistical issues.

The department's duties include installations, military construction, base closure and realignment; environment, safety and occupational health issues; and all logistical matters.

Gibbs visited primarily to gain a better understanding of the Air National Guard, the 125th, our mission, our people, our needs, and assess our capabilities and value as a unit.

Gibbs serves as an advisor to the Secretary of the Air Force on many issues that are important to the Air Force, the ANG and specifically the 125th.

With the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) on the horizon in 2005, visits such as this provide leaders with a true understanding of the value of outstanding Air Guard units such as the 125th.

Colonel James A. Firth, 125th Fighter Wing commander, commented that the visit went 'extremely well' and Secretary Gibbs was very impressed with the 125th.

All of the teamwork demonstrated while working the base cleanup, all the contributions so many people



Photo by Master Sgt. Shaun W. Withers

Colonel James A. Firth, 125th Fighter Wing commander, escorts Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Installations, Environment and logistics, the Honorable Nelson F. Gibbs, out of the 125th Headquarters Building. Gibbs visited with members and leadership of the 125th and FLANG HQ staff here Thursday, July 3, 2003.

made to help research and prepare various parts of the briefing and the great lunch and base tour plan really paid off demonstrating to Secretary Gibbs that the 125th really is a class act, said Firth.

Brigadier Gen. Emmett R. Titshaw, Florida Assistant

Adjutant General for Air, added his kudos to the 125th troops for all the work they did in advance to prepare for Secretary Gibbs.

"The base looked better than I have seen it in years. Well done!" said Titshaw.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Karen M. Strandberg

UP, UP AND AWAY

Jared D. Bittner, son of Maj. Richard E. Bittner, launches a rocket he built during a week-long STARBASE course open only to Air National Guard dependant children, June 17-20, 2003. There are 44 STARBASE sites throughout the country. The program's goal is to raise the interest and improve the knowledge and skills of at-risk youths in math, science and technology by exposing them to technological environments and positive role models found on military bases and installations.

STARBASE

Hands-on math and science labs make learning fun

By Bo Joyner
Citizen Airman

If you look inside a typical fifth-grade classroom, you're likely to see a teacher at a chalkboard trying desperately to hold the attention of 20 to 30 easily distracted 11 and 12-year-olds while reading from a textbook.

But take a peak inside any of the Air Force's STARBASE (Science and Technology Academies Reinforcing Basic Aviation and Space Exploration) science labs and you'll see the same youngsters actively involved in learning science, math and life lessons by actually doing.

"It's all about hands-on," said Wesley Fondal, director of STARBASE Robins at Robins Air Force Base, Ga.

The teachers at STARBASE motivate the kids by letting them do things hands-on. "We really do make learning fun."

Ron Jackson, director of STARBASE Kelly, located on the Kelly Field Annex of Lackland AFB, Texas, agrees.

"The thing I think we do best is make learning fun," he said. "Even though we cover material that might not have interested them before, we are able to do it in a way that keeps them actively involved and makes them learn while they are enjoying themselves."

STARBASE was born in 1991 when second-grade teacher Barbara Koscak turned to nearby Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Mich., for help in motivating her students.

She hooked up with members of the ANG's 127th Fighter Wing, particularly then-Maj. "Rico" Racosky who had just written a book for young people called "Dreams Plus Action Equals Reality." Koscak and Racosky put together a curriculum where math, science and technology come alive with real-world applications.

The Defense Department began providing funding for the program in 1993, and it has grown tremendously since then. Today, there are 44 STARBASE sites throughout

the country.

The program's goal is to raise the interest and improve the knowledge and skills of at-risk youths in math, science and technology by exposing them to technological environments and positive role models found on military bases and installations. During five once-a-week, day-long STARBASE sessions, students fly simulators, tour hangars, meet Air Force members from various career fields, and build and launch their own rockets.

Jackson said he would like to see STARBASE grow so more kids could participate. "There are thousands of kids out there who would benefit from STARBASE but don't have a program available or can't fit into the existing programs because of size limits," he said. "I wish we could double the number of kids we serve."

Operations Security

By Maj. Steven R. Hilsdon
125th OPSEC Officer

We're almost there!!

Up to this point, we have discussed the overall goal of OPSEC, OPSEC terms and the OPSEC process.

As we begin lesson 3 of 4, let's look at some everyday applications of the process to show how good OPSEC practices can support, protect and augment your operation.

I personally feel this is the most critical step because it deals with our daily routine.

Effective implementation of OPSEC policies and countermeasures will have a positive effect on most organizations and workplaces, but much like *security* it takes each and everyone of us to succeed.

Listed below are several areas in your operation that can benefit from good OPSEC principles.

Let's take a look at how OPSEC is applied in these areas.

Day-to-Day Operations

Good OPSEC means integrating considerations of critical information, threat, vulnerabilities, risk and countermeasures into all aspects of your organization.

News releases, responses to requests, communications and habits of your employees, people who come and go from your facility, and training are all activities that should include OPSEC.

The application of OPSEC procedures into the day-to-day operations of your organization

will help to make them second nature to your coworkers.

Contingencies

A contingency is a temporary period of adjustment to your normal work routine to cover some unique event. Contingency operations can be compromised very quickly if security and OPSEC principles are not built into the response team's standard operating procedures.

Personnel and organizations should be briefed early and often as to the sensitivity of an activity and any required protective measures.

Our current contingency has posed additional risks because we tend to get complacent and forget that we are STILL AT WAR.

Planning

Including OPSEC in all planning is essential to success. You need to identify the responsibilities for all OPSEC actions in your plans, including identification of critical

"Personnel and organizations should be briefed early and often as to the sensitivity of an activity and any required protective measures....."

information, threat assessment, vulnerabilities, risk assessment, and countermeasure requirements.

Building OPSEC principles into your plan from the beginning gives you documentation for OPSEC and allows you to track its success



or failure throughout your operation. Being able to track this process allows you to detect any OPSEC problems very early, which can greatly minimize the damage an adversary can do.

Surveys

Surveys examine the effectiveness of all existing countermeasures, identify any vulnerabilities, and assess the risks.

The goal is to prioritize risks requiring intervention and recommend proper countermeasures. Surveys focus on a specific activity or event.

A team of experts who mirror the adversary's approach to intelligence collection conduct the surveys, allowing a certain level of realism.

Surveys should be reviewed regularly to account for changes in critical information, threat, vulnerabilities, and/or risk over time.

Again, it would impractical for two people to conduct surveys for each work center on base.

Without your help OPSEC fails from the start.

Resources for all things military!

By Ms. Beth Eifert
125th Family Readiness

As time passes, more and more fantastic resources are becoming available for military families.

One great place to learn about them is – yes, you guessed it – the Internet.

If you've not yet made the technological leap to the World Wide Web, these sites may give you the motivation to do so now.

www.guardassist.mhn.com

Created for the National Guard Family Program, this site offers hundreds of articles, tips, and fact sheets on topics such as deployment; legal and medical issues; stress management; finances; communication; relationships; and children. Further, it provides Guard benefit (TRICARE) information and local resource directories for child and elder care.

Finally, it offers on-line support from helping professionals and assessment tools for stress, anxiety, insomnia and depression.

To register, enter “ng” as your access code, select your state or territory of residence, choose a user name and password, and follow the additional prompts.

www.nmfa.org

The official site for the National Military Family Association, which seeks to be “the voice for military families.” Military wives and widows seeking financial security for survivors of uniformed service personnel and retirees created the NMFA in 1969.

From their efforts, the Survivors Benefit Plan came into being. In 1984, they reorganized into their current 501 (c) (3) status and work to provide up-to-date information and advocacy for military families.

www.sgtmoms.com

A military spouse created and continually updates this site. She describes it as “military life explained by a military wife” and provides very helpful links, calendars, news, bulletin boards and other helpful information and links.

www.4militaryfamilies.com

An award-winning site created by an Air Force spouse that aspires to be “the one-stop online resource for military family members.”

Here you'll find information on military discounts; careers; parenting; recipes; travel; legal issues; retiree information; support groups and lots more!

www.fangfamilies.org

Our very own website. In it, we offer vital preparedness information to all of our families, along with other vital information and links.



Photo courtesy of Tech. Sgt. Jeffery C. Warren

Technical Sgt. Jeffery C. Warren, 125th Maintenance Operation Group logistics management specialist, comforts his 10-week-old daughter, Megan E. Warren. Megan is a reminder of why family readiness programs are so important. Warren helps out with the 125th Family Readiness program, creating and maintaining the Family Member Database (FMD) that provides digital Family Readiness updates to those who wish to receive it (i.e., newsletters, briefing dates, etc...).



Chief's Words

*Chief Master Sgt. Charles W. Wisniewski
125th Command Chief*

I wanted to update all of you on some of the projects we have been working on. We have established a Wing level First Sergeants Council to work with the Wing Chiefs Council and the Wing Commander to promote morale, welfare and opportunity for the enlisted forces.

The council will also focus on standardizing the various commanders programs such as physical fitness, weight management and family care to name a few.

First sergeants are responsible for managing and ensuring that these programs are implemented equally and fairly throughout the many units that comprise the 125th Fighter Wing.

Another new council in the works is the Junior Enlisted Council (JEC).

Their charter mirrors the councils at active duty bases with the main focus on the junior enlisted. They have a meeting every Saturday UTA at 3 p.m. in the headquarters conference room. A first sergeant and I serve as advisors.

We will be sending out an announcement naming the officers and unit representatives. We invite you to contact your representatives with your thoughts and ideas! I encourage all to get involved in some of the projects they are planning.

We are a progressive group here at the Wing looking to involve everyone from airman basic to chief.

Our senior noncommissioned officers need to be involved in passing along their experience and knowledge.

In turn, the junior enlisted need to learn from our experiences to continue to make changes that will leave the Wing a little better for the next generation of airmen.

Security Issues

*Technical Sgt. Mark J. Perry
125th Antiterrorism Coordinator*

One of the responsibilities of the 125th Fighter Wing is to ensure that every member is given the training to maintain personal security awareness for possible terrorist actions to include antiterrorism tactics, techniques and procedures.

Level One Antiterrorism (AT) is required training for all CONUS-based DoD personnel who are eligible for OCONUS deployment to include family members 14 years and older who are traveling with their sponsor on official business.

Subsequently, Florida Air National Guard members deploying OCONUS are required to receive an AOR update within three months of deployment. Did you know that you can receive this training through a DoD computer-based program?

The training can be accessed at <http://at-awareness.org> **Access Code: aware**. This training provides guidance to understand the Department of Defense Antiterrorism program and the essential steps to

prevent or deter a criminal or terrorist attack.

Members of the 125th Fighter Wing who have completed Level One AT training utilizing the computer-based program should inform their Unit Training Manager (UTM) by e-mailing the completed training information to them.

By accomplishing this, your UTM can document this training in your training records to ensure compliance with Air Force training standards.

Please take the time to review the computer-based program with your family, the information that you receive could prove to be invaluable.

For questions pertaining to Antiterrorism Force Protection matters please contact the 125th Antiterrorism Office (904) 741-7863.

DD Form 214's

*Staff Sgt. Leslie Wright
FLANG Enlistment NCOIC*

All member's requiring a DD Form 214 for Operation Noble Eagle or other supporting contingencies must follow certain procedures in order to better expedite their request.

At the time of demobilization the **member must provide a copy of all orders and amendments relating to Operation Noble Eagle or equivalent contingency** to me or Senior Airman Serita Morgan.

All orders and amendments are needed to compute an ac-

curate account of time the member was activated. Therefore, please ensure that all orders and amendments are provided.

The member's copy one and four of the DD Form 214 will be delivered to the assigned unit orders clerk for each squadron.

All efforts are focused on providing members with their DD Form 214 in a timely manner, however with the current operations tempo we ask all members to be patient.

Please call ext. 7811 with any questions.

Soccer players needed

There will be an open soccer league—you do not have to be on active duty orders—that will start at Naval Air Station Mayport beginning October 2003.

If you are interested, call Se-

nior Airman Josh A. Hornick 741-7385 for more information.

Are you CISM trained?

By Lt. Col. Steven E. Thompson
125th Chaplain

Major Gen. Craig McKinley, 1st Air Force commander, has instructed 1st Air Force chaplains to build a number of Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) trained Crisis Response Teams.

Critical Incident Stress Management teams will primarily be used to help emergency workers deal with any trauma induced in the line of duty.

The CISM team's mission will be to arrive at a disaster area and assess what type of support services will be needed for the emergency workers.

The CISM personnel will then begin talking to the workers in-

volved in the incident and attempt to help them through a very difficult and emotional event. If you are CISM trained, please contact my office, 741-7033, with your name and CISM qualification level.

ESGR Luncheon to be held here August 15

An Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve luncheon is scheduled for Friday, August 15, 11:30 a.m. in the Base Dining Facility here at the 125th Fighter Wing.

During the luncheon employers, accompanied by their employee (guardsman), will receive a mission brief and base tour following the luncheon.

Letters have been mailed to your employers already with RSVP instructions.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Michelle L. Thomas

ABOVE: Master Sgt. Anna M. Durham holds up The Adjutant General's coin given to her by Maj. Gen. Douglas Burnett moments after the retreat ceremony in St. Augustine June 27. Burnett said during his speech that "Durham's career is a tribute to the hard working men and women of the Florida Air National Guard."

RIGHT: Florida Air National Guard Chief of Staff Col. Joseph G. Balskus (center) is promoted to the rank of Brigadier General by his wife Lisa, and Adjutant General Maj. Gen. Douglas Burnett (left) during a ceremony in St. Augustine, June 27. Looking on is Assistant Adjutant General for Air, Brig. Gen. Emmett R. Titshaw.

Two career highlights honored June 27

The promotion of Colonel Joseph G. Balskus, Chief of Staff for the Florida Air National Guard, to general and the career of the first female African American to enlist in the Florida Air National Guard was jointly celebrated in St. Augustine, Fla., June 27.

Master Sgt. Anna M. Durham's upcoming retirement was specially noted at the day's retreat as a 'first' for the FLANG. Durham, the first African American female to join the FLANG, leaves the 125th Fighter Wing after more than 30 years of service.



Photo by Spc. Thomas Kielbasa

COMING HOME



125th Security Forces return from overseas

*By Staff Sgt. Michelle L. Thomas
125th Public Affairs*

Photo Courtesy of Master Sgt. Brian M. Blaquiere

Standing in the airport courtyard at the Jacksonville International Airport, a group of friends and family await the return of loved ones from overseas.

A banner emblazoned with the words "Welcome Home Troops" blocks the pathway of dozens of airline passengers trying to make their way through the airport.

Somehow the weary travelers don't seem to mind as they walk around the group of excited friends and family.

This scene was repeated twice in May when 125th Fighter Wing men and women began coming home from overseas deployments.

Personnel from the 125th Security Forces Squadron returned home from two undisclosed locations in Southwest Asia.

Friends and family welcomed the airmen with laughter and hugs after more than 90 days filled with worry and concern.

The deployments of 13-member teams were initially in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, but both subsequently supported Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The duties were not much different from what we do here, said Master Sgt. Brian M. Blaquiere, the flight chief for the deployment who returned home in May.

"We manned entry control points, the flight line and the search tower, which was probably the only difference."

Security personnel are well trained to tackle the responsibilities of a battlefield.

Many of the training exercises and routine duties performed here are all in preparation for the battlefield.

According to Master Sgt. James W. McMillan, the biggest obstacle in the



Photo Courtesy of the 410 AEW/VI

Deployed personnel called Tent City home for more than 90 days.

Kaiya Tyler finds a comfortable spot—her father's suitcase—to sit during her father's homecoming at the Jacksonville International Airport. Senior Airman Scott G. Tyler from security forces was deployed for more than 90 days to Southwest Asia.



Photo by Master Sgt. Lea-ann Steiner

beginning was the ever-changing weather conditions.

"We first arrived over there in February and sometimes it would get down to forty degrees at night with winds up to 20 mph, and the next day get up in the 80's."

However, while airmen are deployed near and at the battlefield, at home another front emerges.

Many spouses assume the role of single parent and manage the household during this time. "Many families accept the role, which is one of

the toughest things in the world to do," said Beth Eifert, 125th Family Readiness coordinator.

"We forget sometimes that along with the battle front there is the home front. It's another battlefield all in and of itself," said Eifert.

"It's something else that they have to deal with—a place where people are affected, frightened, so they have to be ready just like on the battlefield," added Eifert.



Photo courtesy of the 410 AEW

An airman dons the mask as part of a demonstration. As soon as airmen arrive overseas, they attend Right Start briefings that cover many areas to include chemical warfare training. Having the gas mask at your side 24-hours a day is a way of life overseas.

125th Medical Squadron commander to become 'head dentist' for ANG

*By Staff Sgt. Michelle L. Thomas
125th Public Affairs*

Colonel Ramsey B. Salem never thought he'd come this far.

It was almost enough of a career topper that he was appointed to be the commander of the medical squadron—a position that until 10 years ago was filled by a physician, not a dentist.

"It was an honor to just become the medical squadron commander in 1996," said Salem, who joined the Florida

Air National Guard in 1980 after five years of active duty.

Salem was recently selected to be the Air National Guard Assistant to the Assistant Surgeon General for Dental beginning in 2004.

As the 'head dentist', Salem will serve as a liaison between the Air National Guard dentists and the active duty dentists that make dental policy.

Currently, they are working on solving the



Colonel Ramsey B. Salem

problem of airman being deployed overseas with dental problems.

During his up and coming term, Salem will be instrumental in implementing the program created to solve the problem.

"As we continue to expand and improve the Air Guard's capability to support expeditionary requirements, it will take gifted leaders like Col. Salem to deal with these difficult issues," said Brig. Gen. Charles V. Ickes, II, Chief Operating Officer of the Air National Guard and Salem's former commander.

"Colonel Salem's dedication to the Air Guard and his profession will go a long way in helping the total force find viable solutions," remarked Ickes.

Although his position does not officially begin until June 2004, Salem will spend this year transitioning into the three-year term position.

"Before, the person was picked one month prior to the position starting," said Salem.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Michelle L. Thomas

Dr. Salem performs a routine 'filling' procedure on a patient at his Merrill Road private practice in Jacksonville, Fla.

Continued next page...

"They couldn't get on the ground running with a position that could take awhile to completely take over," added Salem.

"What they did this time was to make the selection a year in advance to give a year of transition time for all those coming in," he said.

He will remain a Drill Status Guardsman (DSG).

However, because the duties will involve traveling the country to different units, Salem foresees that balancing his "busy private practice with the time at the Guard Bureau" will be quite a challenge. And, as with any new undertaking, assuming the new role will mean he will have to say goodbye to the people of the 125th Fighter Wing.

"I've been here for more than 23 years. I'm going to definitely miss the people. We made strides in the past six years including getting an Excellent on the Health Services Inspection," said Salem.

"It's going to be really hard to leave."



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Karen M. Strandberg

Colonel Scott K. Stacy (above) expresses his obvious delight as Col. James A. Firth, 125th Fighter Wing commander, and Stacy's wife Pam affix the new rank of "full bird" to his shoulders in a ceremony conducted here in the 125th Operations lobby July 18. Moments later Col. James O. Eifert exudes a similar sentiment as Col. Firth pins his right shoulder and Eifert's family, pictured right including daughter Kathryn, son Austin and wife Beth, together pin his left shoulder with the rank of "full bird."

As vice commander and second in command, Stacy is responsible for providing manpower, equipment and training for the Wing.

Eifert became the commander of the operations group in October 2002, taking the place of Col. Alan K. Rutherford who is now the Director of Operations at FANG Headquarters.

Eifert is responsible for directing and monitoring programs that include fighter squadron operations, unit training, intelligence, standardization/evaluation, plans and life support, C-130 fighter support aircraft, and C-26 counterdrug operations.

125th gets two new 'full birds'

Lieutenant Col.'s Scott K. Stacy, 125th Fighter Wing vice commander and James O. Eifert, 125th Operations Group commander, pinned on Colonel's rank July 18, 2003.

Stacy became the Wing vice commander after Col. Jeanette B. Booth left the position in August 2002 to become the FANG Headquarters executive support staff officer.



Photo by Master Sgt. Shaun W. Withers

Keeping it in the family...

Guard member's son to attend Air Force Academy

By Staff Sgt. Michelle L. Thomas
125th Public Affairs

For most high school graduates, college is a time for letting go of the structured life carved out by parents and other adult figures.

A time for new grads to make their own schedule, sleep late, ditch a few classes and wear what they please on campus.

Some high school grads, however, take a different direction altogether.

They opt for *more* structure.

Joseph "Brandon" Balskus, 17, son of Brig. Gen. Joseph G. Balskus, Chief of Staff of the Florida Air National Guard, has chosen to attend a school the opposite of what other colleges represent—the Air Force Academy.

He is fulfilling a goal that began, according to his father, Brig. Gen. Balskus, when he that was just three years old.



Photo by Maj. Richard E. Bitner

Joseph "Brandon" Balskus holds the acceptance letter to the Air Force Academy. Seated next to him are his mother, Lisa Balskus, and his father, Brig. Gen. Joseph G. Balskus, Chief of Staff of the Florida Air National Guard.

"He's always liked jets," said Brig. Gen. Balskus. "He was always looking up at them when my wife Lisa and I took him to the Fighter Wing."

"Now, aviation is one of his true loves and again I think growing up in this environment he just noticed that it was something I didn't dislike it was something I loved and I think it got inside of him a little bit," said Brig. Gen. Balskus.

The U.S. Air Force Academy is one of the most selective colleges in the country.

And, according to its admission criteria, prospective candidates need to start preparing "well before consideration for admission" to meet the high admission requirements, intense competition for appointments and the demands cadets will face at the Academy.

Getting in "is a long process that really started the day he started the academy process," said Brig. Gen. Balskus, who recalls that his son began to seriously consider the Academy in junior high school.

"Brandon has always been a self starter," remarked Lisa Balskus. "He is the kind of child that you could just talk to him about what his goals are going to be and you will find him up at 5 a.m. in the morning studying for a test. He is just that way."

There were approximately 11,000 applicants this year – the most in the history of the academy, said Brig. Gen. Balskus. "They chose 1180. Of



U.S. Air Force photo by Anna Risse

U.S. AIR FORCE ACADEMY, Colo. — Cadets of the Air Force Academy Class of 2003 celebrate at graduation ceremonies here May 28 as the Air Force Thunderbirds fly overhead. The 974 students marked the academy's 45th graduating class.

Continued next page...

that 1180 about 960 will actually accept the appointment. And, reason I appreciate it (Brandon being selected) more than anything is that I wanted to pick up the phone and make the phone call and say put my kid in," Brig. Gen. Balskus said. "But they could care less who I am. His SAT scores, his grade point average, his community service, his interview were all the reasons he got in," he said. "I still wanted to go in my uniform, meet the guy and say you know 'how are you doing' but Brandon looked at me and said 'you know what dad, I got this one. I need to do this on my own.' Lisa and I looked at each other and we thought wow—that really impressed us."

Although academics are a major factor in getting in, athletics and community service are just as important.

Brandon played high school football, and participated in numerous community and church related service projects—activities that perhaps differed from those of 'regular' teenagers.

Does he feel he will be missing out by not attending a 'regular' school? No.

"People talk about what I'll be missing like not going to do things like join a fraternity because I won't be going to a 'free college,'" said Brandon Balskus.

"But if you think about it, the whole thing is like one big fraternity—you watch the person's back who's next to you," he said.

"There are lessons about integrity and self discipline that I just won't get at a regular school."

Cadets graduate from five-month-long Florida Youth ChalleNGe program

By Michelle L. Thomas
125th Public Affairs

ST. AUGUSTINE, Fla. – Cadets from the Florida Youth ChalleNGe Academy graduated from the academy's fourth-ever class June 14, at the World Golf Village Renaissance Resort, 500 S. Legacy Trail, St. Augustine, Fla.

Youth ChalleNGe is a community program that leads, trains and mentors at-risk youth so they can become productive citizens



Bryan C. Mason

for America's future. Cadets come from communities around the State of Florida. Among the graduating cadets was Bryan C. Mason, son of Master Sgt. Susan M. Mason, 125th Fighter Wing Historian.

"Everything they teach at the program, we tried to teach him," said Mason.

"Although we tried to instill structure and time management, the instructors were able to get through to him in a way we never could."

According to the program's charter, the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe program is a structured, quasi-military training and mentoring program that develops the life skills, educational levels



Photo by Spc. Thomas Kielbasa

A new cadet gets a gentle 'greeting' on day one.

and employment potential of 16 through 18-year-old high school dropouts. Upon completion of the program, they can earn their GED or High School Diploma.

A five-year Youth Challenge Pilot Program began operating in 10 states in 1993 under Public Law 102-484 and has since been embraced by more than 25 states.

For more information about the program log on to <http://www.ngycp.org/FL> or call 1-866-276-9304.

In the Spotlight

Master Sgt. Melinda C. Skeete

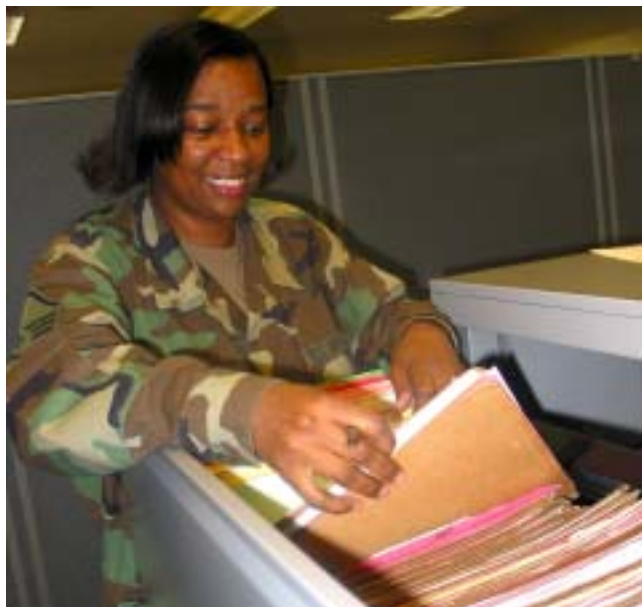


Photo by Staff Sgt. Michelle L. Thomas

Master Sgt. Melinda C. Skeete retrieves a Unit Personnel Record Group (UPRG) for a separating member. Skeete currently supervises assessments and separations for the 125th Mission Support Flight.

Skeete, a military personnel technician for the 125th Mission Support Group, joined the Florida Air National Guard in June 2001 after transferring from the New York Air National Guard. She has a combined military total of more than 18 years of military experience, all with the Guard and Reserves.

Beginning her Guard career with the NYANG in 1994, Skeete said she joined the Air National Guard because she “felt the Guard had more to offer than the Reserves.”

“I’ve been on both sides and I definitely enjoy working with the Guard,” said Skeete.

Skeete, whose family lives in Clermont, Fla., is now full time here on a Title 10 tour and currently supervises assessments and separations for the FLANG.

The most memorable moment for the mother of three was attending the ANG personnel conference in May.

“I learned more at the conference than I would have if I was just a DSG (Drill Status Guardsman),” said Skeete.

“Although I’m full time now, it hasn’t been that long and the conference gave a lot of information that I wouldn’t have the chance to learn about unless it was part of the training on drill weekend,” added Skeete.

Skeete, who plans to retire from the Florida Air National Guard in two years, is married to Cecil Skeete and they have three children, Nicole, 15; Shanice, 10 and Dontae, 6.

Tech. Sgt. Jeff C. Warren

Warren is a logistics management specialist in the 125th Maintenance Operation Group and specifically works as the unit readiness representative for the 125th Maintenance Group. He joined the Florida Air National Guard in 1994 after moving to Florida from Massachusetts to attend school at Embry Riddle Aeronautical University in Daytona.

“I joined the Massachusetts Air National Guard right out of high school as soon as I turned 18,” said Warren, who ultimately plans to become an officer.

Warren is noted by his supervisors and coworkers as being very enthusiastic about his work and the Guard in general.

“Technical Sgt. Jeffery Warren is one of the most energetic airman in maintenance,” said Lt. Col. Ronald G. Corey, 125th Maintenance Group commander. “His can-do attitude and attention to detail is apparent in every task he accomplishes.”

He also helps out with the 125th Family Readiness program, creating and maintaining the Family Member Database (FMD) that allows the program’s coordinator, Beth Eifert, to keep a virtual community for families and friends of the 125th Fighter Wing. It provides digital Family Readiness updates to those who wish to receive it (i.e., newsletters, briefing dates, etc.).

“The database as it stands today would not exist without him,” said Eifert. “I feel grateful and privileged to have him on my team. His ingenuity is endless.”



Photo by Staff Sgt. Michelle L. Thomas

Technical Sgt. Jefferey C. Warren assembles a mobility folder for an incoming member to the 125th Maintenance Operations Group.

Promotions

To Brig Gen

Joseph G. Balskus
Charles V. Ickes II

To Colonel

James O. Eifert
Scott K. Stacy

To Lt Colonel

William S. Bair
Michael H. Robinson
Robert J. Wetzel

To Major

Steven W. Ellis
James C. Spooner

To Captain

Keshan L. Gainey
Alaric J. Jorgensen
Bruce R. Lotarski
Randy D. Neville

To Senior Master Sgt

Joel A. Chappell
Sandra J. King
Daniel L. McKendree
Gloria P. Simon
Tony Whitehead

To Master Sgt

Edgar L. Jaramillo-
Vasquez
Richard L. Kantack, Jr.
Susan M. Mason
Gary A. Poplin

Steadman J. Pottinger
Lawrence J. Show
Desmond D. Stone
Thomas M. Weldon
Tony L. Whitehead

To Tech Sgt

Dalton R. Baker
Tracey D. Canady
Steven L. Colegrove
David R. Franklin
Doris L. Grey
Odis C. Green
Jeffrey L. Harris
Samuel C. Lee
William M. Nugent
Keith A. Summerlin
Charlie F. Tanner

To Staff Sgt

Jeremy E. Adams
Brian A. Johnson
Steven L. Lockett
William A. Meyers II
Darrick N. White
Matthew E. Whiting

To Senior Airman

Ramon A. Acevedo
Julio A. Alvarado
Crystal D. Collum

Ivan G. Correa
Brannon J.
Ferguson
Latoya N. Kalili
Kimberly A. King
Jeremy A.
Levesque
Emily F. Palmer
Erik M.
Sheppard
Jamie A.
Tonkinson
To Airman
Alexandra D.
Figueroa

Welcomes Farewell

2Lt Deborah Anne Congdon, 125MEDS
2Lt Juan A. Deya, 125FW
MSGT Luis R. Crespo, 125CES
SSgt Kevin L. Mobley, 125CES
SSgt Paul D. Palanzi, 125MS
SSgt Micheal D. Stevens, 125LS
SSgt Timothy L. Whited, 125SFS
SrA David L. Conner, 125MS
SrA Gregory A. Kujda, 125MS
SrA Latoya N. Kalili, 125FW
SrA Kelly A. Ladd, 125LS
SrA Nicholas A. Rodgers, 125MEDS
A1C Ryan W. Brooks, 125CES
A1C Douglas L. Bryant, Jr., 125FW
A1C Leamon E. Goines, Jr., 125MSF
A1C Tamika R. Jefferson, 125MSF
A1C Sean G. McKim, 125CES
A1C Christopher J. C. Shultz, 125FW
A1C Daniel A. Wilkinson, Jr., 125CES
A1C Thomas D. Yagecic, 125CES

Lt Col Stephen N. Fields
CMSgt Martin G. Teaster
SMSgt Charles W. Davis
SMSgt Howard D. McDaniel
MSgt John A. Barber
MSgt Anna M. Durham
MSgt Alice F. Overstreet
MSgt Kenneth D. Sherwood
TSgt Crystal J. Milligan

FLANGRA

I hope you are having a good summer. This note is just a reminder of our fall program. If you missed the April meeting you missed a good program on the Air Guard at Cape Kennedy. We held a joint meeting with the Air Force Association - Falcon Chapter and had a good turn out with approximately 100 folks in attendance.

We plan to meet in October at the NAS JAX Officers Club. The date and time is set for Friday October 24 at 6 p.m. Our menu for the meeting will be "Turf and Surf." Hopefully the cost will remain \$18.00.

Our program for October will feature the Honor Guard from the 125th. Additionally, we will receive a briefing on StarBase Florida. I'm sure it will be outstanding. So put October 24 on your calendar and invite a friend. You'll be glad you did. Hope to see you there. Have a safe and relaxed summer!

Sincerely,

Ernie Webster, President



Photo by Maj. Richard E. Bittner

Then, Lt. Col. Scott K. Stacy, 125th Fighter Wing vice commander, is surprised by his daughter Amber (left), wife Pam and daughter Ashley after exceeding the 3000 hour milestone in the F-15 Eagle July 2, 2003. Less than 25 Eagle pilots worldwide have achieved this incredible feat.



**The Eagle's Eye
Florida Air National Guard
125th Fighter Wing (ACC)
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